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CREATIVE CORNER

Many times, the profound insights of a program such as *LIFELINE*[®] express themselves in stark and lyrical prose.

THE OLD MAN

My park was bleak, that bitter wind of late winter (or late life). He and I came together at a park bench and easily, naturally, sat down together and began to communicate by emotion alone. I loved him instantly. He felt European, with a dark hat and long dark coat. It felt like a good coat that had gotten old along with him. He had a slight shuffle to his walk from age, but there was nothing feeble about him. In fact, he radiated that quiet strength that you can feel sometimes from mountains. That feeling of having endured and remained unbroken despite all the assaults of time. Slightly bent with age but untouched at his core.

He was, quite simply, what every man should hope to become at the end of his life. Proud, but proud because he knows his metal has been tested in many fires and never found wanting. Strong, from the work of a lifetime, but stronger still from knowing his own measure. Nothing to prove to anyone. Comfortable with himself, his life's journey, and all his memories. But really, what he gave me was a simple smile. A smile to break your heart. For a man to go through his life and still have a smile like that left inside him, that's all I need to know. That, and the fact that somewhere there's a woman to match such a man.

He got up and walked away after that smile, and I know I can never forget him. He was ... complete.

I pray someday to become him.

Ron Harris
LIFELINE
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